

## BOOK REVIEWS

### NEW BOOKS FROM MOSCOW

**Kremlevskye Kuranty** (Kremlin Chimes), by M. Pogodin. (Moscow 1941, 80 pp.)

In his latest drama, Pogodin, one of the best-known Soviet dramatists, has attempted to write a symbolic play. It is interesting to note that, although the play was published several months before the outbreak of war with Germany, it is already characterized by the new trend of Soviet patriotism. It was probably written in the winter of 1940/41. At any rate, the part of the wicked foreigner is still taken by an Englishman.

The Kremlin chimes are supposed to supply the symbolism. During the Revolution, the mechanism of the venerable chimes had been damaged, and in the play it is to be repaired and at the same time its prerevolutionary melody changed to the "Internationale." This is to show symbolically how Bolshevism creates the new by building up on the old. The play wishes to prove that the same thing that happens to the chimes happens also to people. Old bourgeois and new revolutionaries are drawn together in order—and this is an important point—to get along without foreigners. When the revolutionary sailor Rybakov and the old Jewish clockmaker examine the chimes in the Kremlin, they say:

**Rybakov:** "An ancient mechanism. Probably some Germans built it."

**Clockmaker:** "I rather think Englishmen."

**Rybakov:** "Whatever you pick up—Germans, Englishmen, Swedes."

This must all be changed now.

The most interesting thing about the play is the brazenness with which history has been rewritten. The action takes place about 1921. Anyone who has lived in Russia in those days knows what a bloodbath they were. In the play they are turned into a humorous idyll.

The old engineer Zabelin is suddenly taken away one night. Of course, he and his family think that he is being sent to prison. The author, however, thinks it is very funny that such an idea should occur to the engineer. The soldiers who have come to fetch him have no intention whatever of dragging him off to prison; on the contrary, he is driven off grandly in a motorcar to the Kremlin, straight to Lenin, Stalin, and Dzerzhinsky. The following scenes show that these three are charming and genial men who converse affably and at length with the engineer and the old clockmaker about all kinds of things, among them an Aesop's fable. Here we have the following stage direction by the author: "Lenin leans over the table and begins to laugh. Dzerzhinsky laughs. Stalin laughs. The clockmaker laughs."

Dzerzhinsky, Russia's notorious atheistic executioner, appears as a jolly, pious conversationalist. When the engineer promises the three comrades to

draw up a plan for the electrification of Russia, Dzerzhinsky says: "Thank God! (*Slava Bogu*)."

The author emphasizes these words by having Lenin inquire: "What did you say?" To which Dzerzhinsky replies: "I said, 'Thank God!'"

With touching anxiety for the unfounded worries of the engineer's family, the three kind men insist that Zabelin return to his home in an official car in order to reassure his family as quickly as possible.

Most of the other scenes are just as unreal. For instance, we see Lenin stopping at a farmhouse while he is out shooting. According to Pogodin, the old peasant woman is so impressed that after Lenin's departure she declares he is a true Tsar and, turning to the icon in the corner of her room, prays: "Lord, send him health, happiness, joy, and the fulfillment of all his wishes!"

The only scene that, from a historical point of view, seems halfway convincing is the street scene in Act I, in which the tattered inhabitants of Moscow sell their last possessions and are robbed by vagabond children. But this scene would be difficult to play and is more effective when read. The author gives complicated stage directions. Of one man he says, for example: "He wears an expensive tie."

The truest words in the whole play are spoken by Lenin when he says with regard to the prevailing misery: "It is terrible. Even the beggarwomen are worse off than before."

**The Science of Hatred**, by M. Sholokhov and others. (Moscow and Shanghai, 1942, 66 pp.)

We receive little direct information regarding the morale of the Red Army. But it is often possible to find indirect indications. For instance, one can draw conclusions from the battle cries with which the Red Army is exhorted. During the last few years, three phases can be distinguished here.

In the first phase, the slogans were directed toward the goal of World Revolution. But since they were too abstract they proved to be not very effective and were replaced after 1935 more and more by patriotic slogans. This was the time when the word *rodina* (fatherland), which was banned during the first years of the Revolution, was reinstated. Of course, the goal of the Soviet leaders remained that of World Revolution. But they had to acknowledge the fact that, for the individual soldier, the word *rodina* meant far more than the colorless ideas of Marxism. Under the pressure of the military catastrophes since June 1942, this slogan has apparently also become inadequate. So we find that, during the last few months, a new watchword is being used more and more to spur the Red soldiers on to further sacrifices: the watchword of hatred. Recently a booklet has even appeared in Shanghai, brought out in Russian by a pro-Soviet publishing company,



under the appalling title of *The Science of Hatred*. It makes sad but significant reading.

It goes without saying that it starts off with a quotation from Stalin: "One cannot defeat the enemy if one has not learnt to hate him with all the strength of one's soul." (May 1, 1942.) The book contains a collection of hate-inspiring contributions, and it is interesting to observe how differently the various authors carry out their commission.

Mikhail Sholokhov is the author of *And Quiet Flows The Don*, a work which, by reason of its qualities, is sure to retain its place in Russian literature even in post-Bolshevist days. Sholokhov is a great writer and is perhaps the most outstanding among those who have appeared in the Soviet Union. It is probably for that very reason that one is conscious of his lack of enthusiasm for his task. Sparing in his words, without going into details of horror and without abusive language, he describes the experiences of a Red lieutenant who goes to the front, is wounded, taken prisoner by the Germans, and escapes after a few months. Even today, the artist Sholokhov, who in his novel *Virgin Soil* has, with what is for a Soviet writer an extraordinary amount of impartiality, described both sides of the civil war as it affects a village, finds it impossible to let out at an opponent for whom he doubtless feels respect.

The other authors of this collection are quite different. The prolific non-Russian author Ehrenburg, in his contribution entitled "Justification of Hatred," is carried away to sentences such as the following: "We are not fighting against human beings but against automatons that look like human beings but in whom nothing truly human has remained. Our hatred is all the greater because they outwardly resemble human beings." (p. 39.)

The volume also contains poems, of which we quote two examples:

Hatred must be nearer to you  
Than anything that you hold dear.  
When you shoot,  
Tell yourself: I hate!  
And, hating, exterminate! (p. 45.)

Kill the enemy!  
Strike him down, Red Army soldier!  
Pierce him at close range with the bayonet!  
And finish him . . . .  
Double, treble your hatred . . . .  
May hatred be your unsleeping guide!  
May revenge be your high destiny! (pp. 58-60.)

One cannot read the Soviet press without coming across these preachings of hatred on every page. To take two examples from the daily press:

On November 1, a Shanghai Soviet newspaper contained a report of a meeting of sharpshooters at the front. According to this, a soldier by the name of Tashmetov is supposed to have described his experiences as follows: "I went to Zakharov and said, 'Let's go and kill one German each. There will be two less of them!' 'Good,' said Zakharov." Tashmetov went on to tell how he shot a German soldier and continued: "My heart became so joyous [*radostno*]. That was my first German."

In a report concerning the battle of Stalingrad (in the *Novaya Shina* of October 30, 1942), the correspondent K. Simonov writes: "To get a German with the bayonet, to strike him down, and to see him lying at one's feet, to walk over his still-warm body—that is what gives strength."

The Science of Hatred indeed.—K.M.

## BRIEFLY NOTED

Aus deutscher Märchenwelt (From the World of German Fairy Tales). (Shanghai, 1942, Max Noesler & Co., 58 pp., CRB \$20.00)

*Aus deutscher Märchenwelt* is a charming collection of some of the favorite German fairy tales, legends, children's songs, verses, riddles, etc., beautifully illustrated in the traditional manner. In view of the present lack of good children's books, many German parents will regard this little volume as a godsend, all the more so since its print, paper, and binding are fully up to the highest standards in Europe.

## New Books of the Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai

The outbreak of the Greater East Asia War and the establishment of the Co-Prosperity Sphere have also influenced the activities of so well-known an organization in Japan as the Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, the "Society for the Development of International Cultural Relations," in Tokyo. After formerly spreading Japanese cultural propaganda throughout the world, it is now addressing itself primarily to the Co-Prosperity Sphere. We have before us a few pamphlets that are typical of this society. *Visage du Japon* presents on 54 pages an illustrated cross-section of the life and work of the Japanese people and is intended for French Indo-China. A similar pamphlet presenting the Japanese heavy industry in artistic photographs is written in the Thai language. A language guide which, on 244 pages, contains the most important words and sentences in French, Japanese, and Annamese in three parallel columns, is another interesting work and one which is doubtless entirely new in this combination. Other brochures and books of this kind are to follow. They will contribute towards strengthening the feeling of solidarity within the Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Zehn Jahre Mandschukuo (Ten Years of Manchukuo). (Mukden, 1942, German Chamber of Commerce for Manchuria, 148 pp.)

In commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the empire of Manchukuo, the German Chamber of Commerce for Manchuria has brought out a beautiful and interesting volume entitled *Zehn Jahre Mandschukuo*. It contains short resumes of Manchukuo's history as well as of the development of the various branches of her economic life. There are also several chapters which deal specifically with German-Manchukuo relations. The book, a luxury edition, is an excellent reference work containing fine photographs. It is to be regretted that only 300 copies of the book could be printed for private circulation, since it is doubtless of great appeal to all German-speaking circles in East Asia.